

27 October 1986

C.I.A. IS RECRUITING NEW YORK POLICE

Overseas Duty Is Offered — Ward Pledges Cooperation

By SELWYN RAAB

Responding to requests from the Central Intelligence Agency, the New York City Police Department is making members of the city's force available as temporary agents for counterterrorism operations abroad.

A C.I.A. spokesman, Cathy Pherson, said last week that New York's department was among 18 major municipal police agencies in the country that had been asked recently for assistance in enlisting experienced investigators for the temporary assignments.

"It is a very specific program," she said. "Sometimes the police have the sorts of investigative skills and training you can quickly put to use."

She declined to say where the officers would be sent or why the agency, which is responsible for American anti-terrorism efforts, was seeking assistance. But the recruiting effort comes at a time of rising concern about terrorism abroad.

New York's Police Commissioner, Benjamin Ward, said in an interview that the Director of Central Intelligence, William J. Casey, urged him and top officials from the other police departments at a meeting in July to help the recruitment project.

"Bill Casey informed us that the C.I.A. was interested in hiring retired

or presently employed police officers who had backgrounds in handling undercover operators or who had been undercover operators themselves," Mr. Ward said. "We did not have terrorism before and we have to respond. It's laudatory that we can do something in the interests of national defense."

A spokesman for the city police, Inspector Robert F. Burke, said that as a result of an internal survey of possible applicants for the C.I.A., 210 detectives and investigators in special units expressed interest in joining the Federal agency. Inspector Burke said 68 took an eight-hour examination given by the C.I.A. on Oct. 4, the first screening step in hiring.

The C.I.A. spokesman said she believed that this was the first attempt by the agency to employ large numbers of trained police officers for intelligence work. At least one department, Los Angeles, has reportedly refused to cooperate in the recruitment of its personnel.

The recruitment assistance ordered by Commissioner Ward is an apparent break with a long-standing policy in the department, according to police officials who asked for anonymity. Previously, the department discouraged other law-enforcement agencies from large-scale recruiting because it might result in the loss of experienced detectives or officers who were trained at city expense, the officials said.

However, individual leaves have been granted occasionally for temporary employment with other city or state agencies.

'Nobody Asked Before'

Denying a change in policy, Mr. Ward said: "Nobody asked before. If they had, we would have done it."

"I expect we will lose very few people," Mr. Ward added. "It is an overseas assignment under very dangerous conditions. But if anyone is interested, I won't hold him back."

Ms. Pherson said the C.I.A. officials solicited the officials of 18 police departments at an unpublicized intelligence seminar on terrorism held by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the C.I.A. July 21 at C.I.A. headquarters in McLean, Va.

The response from the police departments for cooperation was "good," Ms. Pherson said. But she declined to say how many cities besides New York agreed to assist in the recruitment

drive or how many police investigators the C.I.A. wanted to employ.

She also refused to identify the police forces represented at the seminar.

Police officials in Los Angeles said the city's Chief of Police, Daryl F. Gates, rejected the C.I.A. request. Mr. Gates would not comment directly on the C.I.A. proposal but through a spokesman, Commander William D. Booth, Chief Gates said, "We need all the police talent we have right here."

In Philadelphia, Police Commissioner Kevin M. Tucker said through a spokesman that he had attended the antiterrorism seminar. The spokesman, Capt. Richard DeLise, said Mr. Tucker declined to comment on whether he would permit the C.I.A. to recruit in the Philadelphia Police Department.

New York City police officials said other departments represented at the July seminar included Houston, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco. Spokesmen for those departments declined to comment.

Inspector Burke said 3,520 detectives and investigators in the city's Detective Bureau, the Organized Crime Control Bureau and the Inspectional Services Bureau were notified about the C.I.A. search for recruits. The total number of city detectives and officers is now 27,231.

About 210 detectives and investigators met with C.I.A. personnel officials on Sept. 26 at the Jacob K. Javits Federal Office Building at 26 Federal Plaza in lower Manhattan, Inspector Burke said. "They were told that the jobs were contracts for three years and that they would probably not be retained as permanent C.I.A. employees," Inspector Burke noted.

He said it was uncertain how many of the 210 submitted applications beyond the 68 who were tested by the C.I.A. earlier this month.

The highest salary for a detective in the city is about \$40,000 a year. Ms. Pherson said the salaries of new agents would depend on their experience and backgrounds.

In the last decade, detectives and investigators from the city's police department have worked jointly with the F.B.I. on local task forces set up to investigate terrorist groups and organized crime, and with the Drug Enforcement Administration on narcotics enforcement.

Police personnel who accept C.I.A. positions would have to retire, resign, or seek leaves of absence, Inspector Burke said.